AC 2025 – 2026 Assessment

Program -- Health and Exercise Science (377)

Division: Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development

Department: School of Kinesiology

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Northwestern State Mission. Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution committed to acquiring, creating, and disseminating knowledge through innovative teaching, research, and service. With its certificate, undergraduate, and graduate programs, Northwestern State University prepares its increasingly diverse student population to contribute to an inclusive global community with a steadfast dedication to improving our region, state, and nation.

College Mission. The Gallaspy Family College of Education and Human Development is committed to working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge to Northwestern students through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. Through the Schools of Education and Kinesiology, and Departments of Military Science, Psychology, and Social Work, the College produces knowledgeable, inspired, and innovative graduates ready for lifelong learning who contribute to the communities in which they reside and professions they serve. Additionally, the GCEHD is dedicated to the communities served by the Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center, NSU Elementary Laboratory School, NSU Middle Laboratory School, and the NSU Child and Family Network to assist children and their families related to learning and development.

Department Mission. The School of Kinesiology's academic programs provide a foundation for our students to leave Northwestern State University as innovative, contemporary leaders prepared for a variety of career opportunities in health, kinesiology, and sport. Our faculty provides a collaborative, supportive learning environment in which students discover, explore, and practice the knowledge, movement, and values that will help ensure a healthy, productive lifestyle and successful career.

Program Mission Statement: Through the completion of program requirements for Health and Exercise Science, students will gain knowledge and skills for employment opportunities within the health, kinesiology, and exercise science industries. Students will acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, critical thinking, research, reflective analysis, communication, and evaluation. The Bachelor of Science Degree in Health and Exercise Science challenges students to develop plausible solutions to the diagnostic and prescriptive response to exercise needs in health scenarios. Through these learning experiences, Health and Exercise Science students are prepared for life and career

success in this every growing field.

Methodology: The assessment process for the Health and Exercise Science program is as follows:

(1) Data from assessment tools are collected and returned to the Department Head.
(2) The Department Head will analyze the data to determine whether students have met measurable outcomes.
(3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the program faculty.
(4) Individual meetings will be held with faculty teaching major undergraduate courses if required (show cause).
(5) The Department Head, in consultation with the HHP Advisory Committee, will propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, curricula and program changes.

Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1: The student will demonstrate a basic knowledge of exercise science.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus objectives.

- HP 2000: Introduction to Exercise Science
- HED 3000: Community Health Promotion
- HP 2630: Motor Learning & Development
- HP 3550: Applied Kinesiology & Biomechanics
- HP 3560: Exercise Physiology

Measure 1.1. (Direct – Knowledge)

On an annual basis, students enrolled in HP 2000, HP 2270, HED 3000, HP 3550 and HP 3560 are administered course exams designed to evaluate the student knowledge and understanding of the foundational concepts, theories, strategies, and challenges of the health and fitness industry. For AC 2025-2026 and moving forward, HP 2630 will take the place of HP 2270 for this portion of the assessment. This adjustment reflects changes to the curriculum (HP 2270 is no longer a required course) and adds another critical early course in the Health and Exercise Science curriculum to enable the evaluation of students in earlier stages of the curriculum. To meet the target for Measure 1.1, 75% of enrolled students will be able to describe a basic knowledge of the health and fitness industry standards by scoring 70% or higher on the exams.

Finding. Target was met.

Analysis.

In AC 2024-2025, the target for Measure 1.1 was met with 77.47% of students achieving a minimum target score of 70% or higher on their final exams in the designated courses (including HP 2270 and excluding HP 2630). In the AC 2024-2025 Program Assessment, it was suggested that this percentage of students

achieving minimum standards reflected increased academic rigor in the Health and Exercise Science program, and it was predicted that student performance in AC 2025-2026 would improve, especially for students who took the more rigorous version of their prerequisite courses in AC 2025-2026.

As anticipated, in the current year AC 2025-2026, 88.41% of students were able to achieve the predesignated target of 70% or higher on final exams in these courses (excluding HP 2270 and including HP 2630). While acknowledging that one course on the list of relevant courses has changed for Measure 1.1, this result highlights a 10.94% increase in the percentage of students performing at or above the standard of success. In AC 2025-2026, the department continued to improve the curricula for prerequisite coursework leading to HP 3550 and HP 3560, resulting in higher-level performance in those courses during the current year. Changes to prerequisite curricula included major updates to the course materials and content covered in HP 2000 and HP 2630, as well as conscious efforts by Health and Exercise Science faculty to bridge content from University Core courses (e.g., BIOL 1010, BIOL 2250 and 2251, PSYC 2050) directly to Health and Exercise Science major courses. It is expected that in AC 2026-2027, approximately 80-85% of students will continue to meet the minimum threshold for Measure 1.1.

Decision.

In AC 2025-2026, the target was met.

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2025-2026 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2026-2027, the department will see further improvements to the laboratory spaces in the Health and Human Performance building, including a biomechanics lab, updated weight room and exercise physiology equipment, and additional technologies for measurement and assessment in health and exercise science. Faculty will continue to create novel and rigorous coursework for all our classes, especially as it relates to experiential learning and applied activities that directly link their education in the School of Kinesiology to their future careers. Lower-level courses will continue to emphasize links to basic sciences and other University Core courses to better prepare students for upper-level coursework and the required capstone internship.

Measure 1.2. (Direct – Skill / Ability)

Students will demonstrate their critical thinking and problem-solving skills through a variety of case studies, as well as scenario-driven exercises in which they are required to analyze and develop a response to a health and exercise related situation. In these responses, they must demonstrate proper response and actionable recommendations based on the information presented. 75% of the students will score 70% or higher on these exercises.

Finding. Target was met.

Analysis.

In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. Based on information gathered from the data, faculty made the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2025-2026, the Health and Exercise Science program faculty collaborated closely to ensure that all laboratory and practical experiences offered to our students were complementary, diverse, practical, and provided realistic and immediate feedback, particularly when it comes to health and fitness assessment. Syllabi were reviewed and aligned with national standards and workforce needs. To determine student performance on assignments focused on case study, scenario-driven, and/or critical thinking exercises, data were collected from course sections that utilized these types of assignments, based on instructor feedback.

In AC 2025-2026, the following courses were utilized in the analysis of Measure 1.2: two sections of HP 2000 (*n* = 44), three sections of HED 3000 (*n* = 44), and two sections of HP 2630 (*n* = 40). These sections were chosen because they utilized assessments of the nature required for Measure 1.2. Of note, while the Measure 1.2 assessment for AC 2024-2025 included HP 3560, these types of assessments were not utilized in AC 2025-2026. In AC 2025-2026, HP 2000, HED 3000, and HP 2630 all utilized multiple case study, scenario-driven, and/or critical thinking assignments and activities throughout the semester. Therefore, for Measure 1.2, cumulative assignment scores were utilized when appropriate to account for each student's overall semester performance.

A total of 128 students in these course sections were given the opportunity to complete these types of assignments, and of them, approximately 83.59% (*n* = 107) completed these assignments with a score of 70% or higher. This reflects similar performance to AC 2024-2025, in which 83.2% of students met the threshold for Measure 1.2. Improvements to laboratory spaces and the inclusion of faculty who are content-specific specialists in exercise science have provided students with more opportunities to access diverse and creative hands-on laboratory experiences. Because our program prepares students for pre-professional programs (i.e., physical therapy school, occupational therapy school, athletic training master's programs, etc.), critical thinking and scenario-driven assignments and activities are particularly important and practical.

Decision. In AC 2025-2026, the target was met.

Based on an analysis of the AC 2025-2026 data, faculty will implement the following in AC 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. The Health and Exercise Science program faculty will collaborate closely to ensure that all laboratory and practical experiences offered to our students are complementary, diverse, practical, and provide realistic and immediate feedback, particularly when it comes to health and fitness assessment. The 1000 and 2000 level courses have incorporated more case study, laboratory-based, and scenario-driven activities, as stated in last year's program assessment. For AC 2026-2027, this trend will continue, with added emphasis on

reintroducing more laboratory and/or practical experiences in our HP 3550 and HP 3560 courses. Faculty will work together to restructure the student learning outcomes to align with the updated Health and Exercise Science curriculum and national standards, as well as determine precise measures to determine student achievement.

SLO 2: The student will demonstrate the ability to develop an exercise prescription plan, which encompasses the initial prescription, maintenance for such prescription and subsequent re-evaluation strategies for apparently healthy populations.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus below.

HP 4170: Testing, Evaluation, and Prescription of Exercise in Health and Human Performance

Measure: 2.1. **(Direct – Skill / Ability)**

Students will prepare a prescription plan for a specified health need/condition. In these responses, the student will demonstrate proper progression toward the expected outcome and actionable recommendations based on the scenario(s). 75% of the students will score 80% or higher on these exercises.

Finding. Target was not met.

Analysis.

In AC 2024-2025, the target was met with approximately 84% of students receiving a grade of at least 80% or higher on assessments of this nature. Based on an analysis of the data, the following changes were made in AC 2025-2026 to continue the cycle of improvement: exercise testing and prescription foundations were introduced earlier in the curriculum in relevant courses such as HP 2630, HP 3550, and HP 3560, which enabled students in HP 4170 to focus on more advanced equipment, settings, and applications of their knowledge to real-world scenarios. Data was collected from the two sections of HP 4170 taught during AC 2025-2026. Of the students enrolled in this course (n = 15), 66.67% of them (n = 10) received a grade of at least 80% on their assignments requiring them to write customized exercise prescription plans. This does not exceed the preset threshold of 75% of students scoring 80% or higher on assignments of this nature and reflects decreased performance from AC 2024-2025 (84%). HP 4170 is primarily a laboratory-based course and incorporates many opportunities for students to conduct fitness testing, explore various contraindications, warning signs and modifications, and create exercise prescription recommendations based on a client's specific needs. A number of possible factors may have led to this decreased performance in HP 4170, including increased academic rigor and expectations of student deliverables, as well as the decreased use of scenario-driven activities in classes like HP 3550 and HP 3560 this past year. Additionally, it should be noted that while overall enrollment in Health and Exercise Science courses is trending upward, registration in HP 4170 during AC 2025-2026 was less than half of the registration of AC 2024-2025. Therefore, the percentage of students who were successful during AC 2025-2026 is highly

influenced by the smaller number of students.

Decision.

In AC 2025-2026, the target was not met.

Based on an analysis of the data for AC 2025-2026, the following changes will be made in AC 2026-2027 to continue the cycle of improvement: In AC 2026-2027, basic exercise-science concepts will continue to be incorporated into introductory-level coursework, especially in HP 2000 and HP 2630. Particular emphasis will be placed on the components of fitness and motor learning, the neuromuscular system, and reviews of relevant basic science concepts from chemistry, biology, and physics. Incorporating these concepts into these particular courses will enable students to more effectively engage in laboratory and case-study work in upper-level classes, and better prepare them for HP 3550, HP 3560, and HP 4170. In addition to these changes, scenario-driven activities should be incorporated more frequently in HP 2630, HP 3550, and HP 3560 to prepare students for the fully applied HP 4170 course requirements. Lastly, Faculty will create syllabi for all Health and Exercise Science courses to incorporate the introduction of upper-level exercise science content, especially those related to the neuromuscular system, biomechanics, motor learning, fitness assessment and components of fitness and health, in lower-level courses to provide a strong foundation for HP 3550, HP 3560, and HP 4170.

Measure: 2.2. (Direct -- Knowledge)

Students will be able to understand and identify the correct prescriptive activity and the duration of exercise needed to satisfy the outcome required by the respective scenario(s). This will be determined with 75% of the students earning a score of at least 80% on semester course exams.

Finding: Target was not met.

Analysis:

In AC 2024-2025, the target was not met, with approximately 17% of students receiving a grade of 80% or higher on their final exams in HP 4170. Based on an analysis of the data from AC 2024-2025, the following changes were made in AC 2025-2026 to continue the cycle of improvement: In AC 2025-2026, students enrolled in HP 4170 experienced enhanced laboratory experiences with workforce applicable skills. The Exercise Physiology Laboratory and weight room continued to receive updated technology and experiences for students. Additionally, Health and Exercise Science faculty worked together to create a curriculum plan for ensuring these critical concepts are introduced and reinforced in the relevant prerequisite coursework, including HP 2630, HP 3550, and HP 3560, among others.

In AC 2025-2026, two sections of HP 4170 were taught: one in Fall 2025 (n = 6) and one in Spring 2026 (n = 9). All students took the final exam, and of them, approximately

33.33% of them (5/15) received a score on the final exam of 80% or higher. This represents an increase from AC 2024-2025 but is still well below the desired threshold score of 80% or higher on these exams for Measure 2.2. Despite this shortcoming, it should be noted that all students enrolled in HP 4170 in AC 2025-2026 (*n* = 15) accomplished passing final exam grades of 70% or higher. As in AC 2024-2025, this finding suggests that students in AC 2025-2026 have an acceptable level of understanding in exercise science, but that students may lack the necessary higher-level types of knowledge for effective application, analysis, and evaluation.

Decision.

In AC 2025-2026, the target was not met.

Based on an analysis of the data for AC 2025-2026, the following changes will be made in AC 2026-2027 to continue the cycle of improvement: Students' ability to prescribe exercise and modifications with accuracy is critical. Therefore, moving into AC 2026-2027, students enrolled in HP 4170 will continue to experience the enhanced laboratory experiences offered by the updated Exercise Physiology Laboratory and newer faculty members. Additionally, more scenario-driven and application-based activities and assignments should be utilized in our mid- and upper-level courses, including HP 3550 and HP 3560, to better prepare students for the rigorous demands of comprehensive exercise science application in HP 4170.

SLO 3: The student will be able to demonstrate the ability to administer test protocols for evaluating the components of physical fitness.

Course Map: Tied to syllabus course objectives below.

- HP 3560: Exercise Physiology
- HP 4170: Testing, Evaluation, and Prescription of Exercise in Health and Human Performance
- HED 3000: Community Health Promotion

Measure 3.1. (Direct – Skill / Ability)

The student will earn a performance evaluation score of 70% or higher in the administration of testing protocols for various physical fitness components through laboratory experiences. This will be determined with 75% of the students earning a score of at least 80% on semester course exams.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. Based on an analysis of the data, the following changes were made in AC 2025-2026 to continue the cycle of improvement: In AC 2025-

2026, it was recommended that faculty develop course materials and lesson plans focusing on the administration of fitness assessments and the appropriate interpretation of results. While scores on laboratory exercises and final exams in HP 3560 are adequate, students continue to struggle with the more complex content taught in HP 4170, particularly in comprehensive exercise science knowledge application to context-specific assessments. Therefore, incorporating fitness testing protocols, contraindications, modifications, and applications into other prerequisite coursework like HP 2530 and HP 3550 has benefited students when they approached their senior-level coursework.

Therefore, to determine student performance on the administration of testing protocols, data was collected from courses that incorporated laboratory and/or application-based testing protocol activities. Courses fitting this requirement in AC 2025-2026 included one section of HP 3560 (*n* = 18) and two sections of HP 4170 (*n* = 15). Of these students, 100% (33/33) passed the laboratory activities focusing on testing protocols. This continues the positive trend of high lab scores for students in Health and Exercise Science. As prerequisite curricula and laboratory resources continue to improve, it is anticipated that performance in AC 2026-2027 is likely to reflect a similarly high level of success.

Decision.

In AC 2025-2026, the target was met.

Based on an analysis of the data for AC 2025-2026, the following changes will be made in AC 2026-2027 to continue the cycle of improvement: In AC 2026-2027, it is recommended that faculty continue to develop course materials and lesson plans focusing on the administration of fitness assessments and also the appropriate interpretation of results, and that these course materials are incorporated earlier in the curriculum and utilized throughout the HES curriculum. While students are finding success in the basic administration of testing protocols, they are struggling in the areas of interpretation and application to exercise prescription (as seen in Measures 2.1 and 2.2). Therefore, incorporating fitness testing protocols, contraindications, modifications, and applications into other prerequisite coursework like HP 2000, HP 2530, and HP 3550 will continue to have students better prepared for when they approach their senior-level coursework.

Measure 3.2. (Direct – Knowledge)

Students will correctly select the appropriate test protocol to be used in various physical fitness and exercise settings (corporate, recreational, clinical, and/or commercial). This will be determined with 75% of the students earning a score of at least 70% on semester course exams.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. Based on analysis of data from AC 2024-2025, the following changes were made in AC 2025-2026 to continue the cycle of improvement. Faculty in the Health and Exercise Science program focused on presenting fitness assessment opportunities to students, especially in the second and third years of the program, so that the hands-on laboratory experience in upper-division coursework would be more meaningful, allowing students to focus on more complex ideas and application to the real-world settings and scenarios they will be working in. Additionally, increased opportunities for real-world observation in fitness and exercise settings are presented to students in HP 2000, HP 2630, and HP 4180, providing more chances for students to make direct content connections to professional settings.

To determine student performance on Measure 3.2, data was collected from four courses: three sections of HED 3000 (n = 44), two sections of HP 3560 (n = 33), and two sections of HP 4170 (n = 15). During AC 2025-2026, 89 of 92 students (96.74%) achieved final exam scores of 70% or higher, indicating that the target score of 75% of students was met for Measure 3.2. This percentage reflects similar performance to scores in AC 2024-2025.

In HED 3000, HP 3560, and HP 4170, students learn about the various settings in which fitness and wellness testing are utilized (corporate, recreational, clinical, and commercial settings), and which methods are most appropriate and practical to meet the goals of the professionals and clients in those settings. Students in these courses were able to adequately identify the appropriate testing protocols that are used in these various settings, knowledge that is directly applicable to our pre-professional students (pre-physical therapy, pre-occupational therapy, pre-athletic training), as well as students interested in other allied healthcare, fitness, and sports settings. Knowledge derived from these courses will enable Health and Exercise Science students to bring their expertise to multiple work settings.

Decision.

In AC 2025-2026, the target was met.

Based on analysis of data from AC 2025-2026, the following changes will be made in AC 2026-2027 to continue the cycle of improvement. Faculty in the Health and Exercise Science program will focus on presenting fitness assessment opportunities to students, especially in the second and third years of the program, so that the hands-on laboratory experiences in upper-division coursework are more meaningful and can focus on more complex ideas and application to real-world settings and the scenarios they will be working in. Additionally, faculty will provide course materials and applicable activities that encourage students to spend more hours improving their ability to administer test

protocols for evaluating the components of physical fitness.

Comprehensive Summary of Key Evidence of Improvement Based on Analysis of Results.

Program faculty made several decisions after examining results of data analysis from AC 2024-2025 which resulted in improved student learning and program improvement in AC 2025-2026.

- Faculty engaged Health and Exercise Science students with unique instructor-generated case scenarios, the application of skills, abilities, and theories to course curriculums. This curriculum is a face-to-face program, with strong emphasis on hands-on learning.

- Faculty taught HP 4170 in lab-like conditions, as students evaluated case studies and wrote protocols for activity-based prescription treatments.

- Faculty provided students with enhanced experiences in the updated Exercise Physiology Laboratory and weight room spaces, enabling students to utilize new and updated equipment used for fitness and wellness testing.

- Faculty updated the Health and Exercise Science curriculum to be in-line with industry standard and professional school programs, integrating more coaching and fitness-based coursework to prepare students to be successful in internships and a variety of workplaces.

- The School of Kinesiology hired a recent Master's level graduate of Health and Human Performance as a full-time instructor, which has greatly enhanced the faculty's ability to provide higher quality health and exercise science content and focus on enhanced research and departmental development.

Summary Plan of Action for Moving Forward:

Program faculty examined the evidence and results of data analysis from AC 2025-2026 and will take steps to continue to improve student learning in AC 2026-2027:

- SLO 1: Faculty will work together to restructure the student learning outcomes to align with the updated Health and Exercise Science curriculum and national standards, as well as determine precise measures to determine student achievement.

- SLO 2: Faculty will create syllabi for all Health and Exercise Science courses to incorporate the introduction of upper-level exercise science content, especially those related to the neuromuscular system, biomechanics, motor learning, fitness assessment and components of fitness and health, in lower-level courses to provide a strong foundation for HP 3550, HP 3560, and HP 4170.

- SLO 3: Faculty will collaborate to review the course curricula for HP 3550, HP 3560, and HP 4170 to determine the specific changes needed in prerequisite coursework for better performance in HP 4170, specifically in the area of exercise testing and prescription; additionally, faculty will review grading criteria in HP 3560 and HP 4170 to ensure alignment with course learning objectives.